State Water Resources Control Board

Division of Clean Water Programs
2014 T Street • Sacramento, California 95814 • (916) 227-4351
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 944212 • Sacramento, California • 94244-2120
FAX (916) 227-4349 • Internet Address: http://www.swrcb.ca.gov

Winston H. Hickox
Secretary for Environmental Protection

Gray Davis
Governor

May 12, 2000

ENFORCEMENT ALERT #2: FOLLOWUP

To: All Local Agency Underground Storage Tank Program Managers and CUPAs

The purpose of this letter is to provide further guidance and details regarding the Enforcement Alert we issued on April 24, 2000.

As stated in the first Enforcement Alert, the intent of this effort is to identify, document, report, and photograph single wall underground piping systems that contain any length of steel piping, fittings, and/or connections that are not isolated or cathodically protected. Due to the concern that single-wall systems with unprotected steel may pose a threat to the environment and the fact that these conditions have been discovered statewide, there is need to expedite inspections of these systems.

We recommend that you conduct a preliminary assessment to verify compliance of single-wall piping systems with upgrade requirements.
We recommend that you conduct a preliminary assessment of as many facilities as possible. The preliminary assessment consists of an inspection of both the dispenser and turbine areas described as follows. Unprotected steel connections and fittings have been found under the dispenser beneath the shear valve. To determine the existence of steel fittings or connections in the dispenser areas, remove the dispenser panels and with a flashlight inspect the piping beneath the shear valve. In some cases the backfill may have completely covered the connections and it will be necessary to excavate the surrounding area with a hand trowel. Take a picture of the dispenser area prior to disturbing any soil. Verify that steel fittings or connections are not in contact with the backfill. To be compliant with the upgrade requirements, the system must be cathodically protected or be isolated from the backfill, for example using a containment boot covering the steel transition to the fiberglass piping.

Unprotected steel connections and fittings have also been found in the turbine area where the product piping exits the turbine head. Existence of steel fittings can be determined by removing the manway cover over the turbine and visually inspecting the area. This area is also subject to encroachment by backfill and a hand trowel may be needed to uncover the piping. Take a picture of the turbine area prior to disturbing any soil. Verify that steel fittings or connections are not in contact with the backfill. To be compliant with the upgrade requirements, the system must be cathodically protected or be isolated from the backfill, for example using a containment boot covering the steel transition to the fiberglass piping.

If the dispenser or the turbine areas are <u>not</u> compliant, what initial documentation and actions should be taken?

1. Take at least two pictures at different angles to document each dispenser and turbine area. Keep a log of all pictures taken.
2. Keep a detailed description of all findings.
3. Document, photograph, and report any signs of leakage.
4. Notify the owner and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) staff, see contacts below.

When is it appropriate to require the entire single wall piping system to be uncovered?

Most single wall systems were constructed during a period when it was common practice to use steel fittings and connectors throughout the piping system. Due to the high probability of finding unprotected steel components, a visual inspection is the only conclusive way to confirm the piping system's compliance with upgrade requirements. Therefore, it is appropriate to require that the piping system be uncovered from the dispenser to the turbine if either of the following circumstances exist:

- the dispenser or turbine areas are determined to be out of compliance, or
- a facility applies for a permit to repair, upgrade, or remove a single wall system.

It is critical that your agency be present during the removal of the overburden. This allows you to inspect the piping system in-situ and photograph and document any evidence before it is damaged or lost.

What should you be looking for when the piping is uncovered?

To have met the 1998 upgrade requirements, single-wall motor vehicle fuel piping systems constructed of corrodible materials must have isolated all components subject to corrosion from backfill or provided cathodic protection. This applies to any length of steel piping, fittings, and/or connections in the piping system. An additional concern is the construction of piping systems when a mix of piping products is present. For example, bonding of two different manufactured fiberglass products together, including fittings, is not in accordance with manufacturer's installation instructions. It is also important to confirm that any upgrades or repairs made to the system were done according to the manufacturer's specifications, as required by regulations.

What procedures should be followed and what documentation should be made at the time the piping systems are exposed?

1. In addition to the notification that your agency requires for contractors to begin work, require the contractor to make an inspection appointment with you for the removal of overburden or excavation. This inspection appointment should be made at least 72-hours in advance so that SWRCB staff can accompany your inspector.
2. Notify the SWRCB of the date and time of the inspection.

3. Notify the owner that the contractor must keep piping in place and intact until pictures have been taken and proper documentation has been made.
4. Take at least two pictures at different angles to document each possible violation. Keep a log of all pictures taken.
5. Keep detailed descriptions of all findings.
6. Document, photograph, and report any sign of leakage.
7. Document any statements of individuals on site at the time of excavation.

As with any enforcement action, the case must be adequately documented. The above list offers guidance to assist in gathering of information needed in order to proceed with an enforcement action. If you are denied permission to inspect any single wall underground piping systems, or if you have questions concerning the collection of evidence, please contact David Boyers, Staff Counsel, SWRCB, at (916) 227-4420 and or your local District Attorney.

Any other questions regarding this Enforcement Alert should be directed to Barbara Wightman at (916) 227-4318 or by E-mail at wightmab@cwp.swrcb.ca.gov (on vacation until June 7) or Mary Drewry at (916) 227-4483 or by E-mail at drewrym@cwp.swrcb.ca.gov.
Sincerely,

Elizabeth L. Haven, Manager
Underground Storage Tank Program

cc: Niloufar Glosson, California Project Officer
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
75 Hawthorne Street, WST 8
San Francisco, CA 94105